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ABSTRACT

This publication introduces and presents an Effective Schools Checklist that can serve as a broad guide for administrators comparing their schools to the profile of an effective school. The categories assessed are school climate, institutional organization, the curriculum, instruction, training and development, and evaluation and assessment. (PGD)

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INCREASING SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS ON LOW-PERFORMING CAMPUSES

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REACH

REALISTIC EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT CAN HAPPEN

EA 018 880

Effective Schools Checklist

Use this checklist to compare the characteristics of your particular campus with the profile of an effective campus. Place a checkmark in the space to the left of each item that is evident on your campus. Place an asterisk next to each item not evident on your campus. Are there other characteristics you think should be added? Are some characteristics unique to your campus?

SCHOOL CLIMATE

The school's environment encourages the capabilities and emphasizes the worth of all individuals.

Caring

___ A plan exists to promote school and community interaction.

Respect

___ Staff are committed to school goals.

___ Staff and students show mutual respect for one another.

___ The school is safe, clean, and attractive.

Trust

___ A climate of confidence and trust exists among students, teachers, parents, administrators, and trustees.

Morale

___ Staff and students support one another and work together harmoniously.

Social Development

___ Staff serve as models and reward appropriate behavior.

___ A code of conduct developed by students, staff, and parents specifies acceptable student behavior, procedures, and consequences.

___ Students, parents, and staff accept the code and share the responsibility for discipline.

Academic Development

___ The school community believes that all students can learn and that school makes the difference between success and failure.

___ Students and staff expect to be successful.

___ The accomplishments of students and staff are recognized formally and informally.

___ Awards are set at several performance levels, providing all students with opportunities for success and recognition.

___ Incentives and rewards are structured to build persistent, intrinsic motivation.

ORGANIZATION

A written statement of school beliefs and goals is developed cooperatively, with contributions from community groups.

___ School goals are used to plan the school's educational objectives and activities.

___ Staff are fully involved in implementation planning.

___ Implementation is checked frequently, activities are modified for improvement, progress is noted and publicized, and improvement is renewed or redirected.

Placement and grouping practices are determined by student needs.

___ The placement and assignment of students to classes and teachers reflect an assessment of each student's needs and each teacher's skills.

___ Grouping practices are flexible and serve the varying and changing needs and abilities of students.

___ Preventive or remedial programs are provided as soon as their need becomes evident.

Sufficient time is allocated to accomplish the school's educational objectives.

___ The school calendar is organized to provide maximum learning time.

___ Class time is used for appropriate learning tasks.

___ Interruptions are kept to a minimum.

The principal demonstrates skills that enable the school to reach its goals.

____ The principal sets expectations for the quality of the curriculum and helps teachers implement it.

The principal:

- ____ applies effective school practices
- ____ observes teachers regularly
- ____ confers with teachers immediately following observations, reinforcing effective practices and remediating ineffective ones.

The principal promotes efficient:

- ____ assignment of students, staff, and volunteers
- ____ use of materials and equipment
- ____ operation of facilities
- ____ scheduling of time

____ The principal encourages leadership from students, teachers, and community members.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum is based on clear goals and objectives.

____ Staff, students, and the community know the scope of the curriculum and priorities within it.

____ Clear relationships among learning goals, instructional activities and resources, and student assessments are written down.

____ Learning objectives are appropriate for the growth level of each individual child.

____ Teachers work together to provide a learning continuum.

The curriculum includes experiences that provide children with basic skills necessary to function effectively in our society.

____ In the basic curriculum, learning objectives include decision-making techniques taught through problem-solving and higher-level thinking skills.

____ Children are taught to take responsibility for their own education and are helped to develop strong study skills, use time efficiently, and complete tasks.

The curriculum is supported by adequate financial and material resources.

____ Equipment, supplies, and services needed to support the curriculum are readily available.

____ The school uses resources from other educational institutions, parents, business, industry and service organizations.

____ Appropriate and relevant materials are available for each student.

There is a plan for monitoring, assessing, and supervising curriculum implementation.

____ Instruction is monitored to ensure use of the written curriculum.

____ Appropriate materials are used to reinforce curriculum objectives.

____ Teachers use instructional techniques that are relevant to curriculum objectives and to research-based learning principles.

____ Teachers use formal and informal evaluation techniques and instruments to measure the success of the curriculum.

INSTRUCTION

Teachers plan and provide effective instruction to accomplish school goals.

____ Teachers believe all students can succeed.

____ Teachers use effective teaching practices to teach learning objectives.

____ Teachers use a variety of grouping patterns, ranging from whole class to one-to-one instruction.

____ Teachers continually diagnose academic needs and prescribe appropriate educational activities for individual students, considering learning styles and rates of learning.

____ Teachers use a variety of classroom management skills to create an orderly, comfortable learning environment.

Students are taught how to learn and to value learning.

____ Students believe they can learn.

____ Students understand that they share the responsibility for successful learning.

____ Students are held accountable for the quality of their work.

____ Students can apply what they have learned.

The instructional program assures the attainment of desired student outcomes.

____ Measurable educational objectives are consistent with school goals.

____ Learning tasks are analyzed. Materials and activities are linked to objectives and goals.

____ Appropriate homework is reviewed for student learning and returned promptly.

____ Students are taught critical-thinking skills.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Each school has an effective staff development program for all members of the staff.

Staff:

____ The design of the program is based on needs assessments and includes recommendations by the participants.

____ Programs are relevant to actual responsibilities.

____ Programs are evaluated for effectiveness.

____ Effectiveness is validated through improved teaching practices.

Principals:

____ Opportunities are based on identified job responsibilities.

____ Effectiveness is based on subsequent job performance.

EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

Evaluation data are used to improve the school's program.

____ Evaluation relates to the attainment of particular goals.

____ The results of teacher-made and specific curriculum tests are used to make instructional decisions.

____ Standardized tests are used to provide comparative data.

____ Validated evaluation techniques and instruments are used routinely.

____ Results are made available to all interested parties.

Student assessment and evaluation are based on mastery of defined objectives of the curriculum.

____ Mastery assessments and the curriculum are matched.

____ Common criteria for curriculum mastery and student evaluation are followed.

____ Assessment results are used to develop appropriate educational plans for each student.

____ Results of assessment and evaluation are reported to parents.

____ Positive recognition is given to students as they master curriculum objectives.

A fair and systematic procedure is followed for the appraisal of teachers and administrators.

____ Staff know evaluation criteria and procedures.

____ Evaluation is based on firsthand data and evidence.

____ The evaluation system distinguishes between effective and ineffective performance.

____ A growth plan exists that offers resources for improvement of performance.

____ Performance significantly above the norm is rewarded.

Introduction

The effective schools research of the last ten years provides practical information for administrators working to improve achievement on low-performing campuses. The research describes the characteristics of schools that are already instructing children effectively; it does not describe the steps taken to achieve school effectiveness.

The *Effective Schools Checklist* in this publication can serve as a broad guide for administrators comparing their campuses to the profile of an effective campus. However, we suggest that readers pursue appropriate practices by reviewing the research literature in detail and considering processes for improvement that are appropriate to unique, local needs.

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REACH

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New curriculum rules adopted by the State Board of Education in June 1986 require districts to provide alternative strategies or programs that will help low-achieving students succeed in school. REACH is intended to provide technical assistance information to complement this new district responsibility. Booklets describing successful models of alternative approaches to learning will be distributed during the 1986-87 school year. For information about this publication, contact the Division of Exemplary Programs, Texas Education Agency, at (512) 463-9661.